



Lappe Nordic Newsletter

Sept 2001

Another summer is drawing to a close and it is time to plan and train for the upcoming ski season. Read on and discover what the Lappe Nordic Ski Club and Lappe Nordic Ski Centre has planned for the 2001-2002 season.

Lappe Nordic Ski Club held it's Annual General Meeting in May. Approximately 20 people attended and a new Board of Directors was elected. They are:

President	Liz Inkila
Vice President	Gerry Shipston
Treasurer	Terry Marshall
LSSD Rep	Marc Metsaranta
Secretary	Werner Schwar
Athlete's Rep	Timo Puiras
Jackrabbit Coor	Judi Vinni
Director	Loretta Maepea
Director	Peter Maley
Director	Damon Dowbak
Director	Alex Lawson
Director	Vacant

We do have a vacancy on the Board and would love to see a new face with new ideas to join. If you are interested please call Liz at 767-1860, speak to any of the Board members, or join us at the next meeting.

At the AGM there was a great deal of discussion as to the direction that the club should be taking. We have been struggling for the past few years with a declining membership. Uncertain snow conditions have contributed to the situation. We are developing a questionnaire to help determine our members' needs. This will be available at the Open House. Please take the time to fill out this questionnaire. We are trying to renew our members' interests and encourage new skiers to join our Club and ski the best trails in Thunder Bay.

Nine years ago, I attended my first Open House. I was over 8 months pregnant, and I joined the women's group at my husband's insistence. Being a relative novice, and 0% Finn (read Judi's contribution), I found a place that welcomed my family with open arms.

Not only did I learn how to ski, although some people would dispute that, I became a member of a wonderful group of volunteers and their families. It has been an interesting, fun and rewarding journey. Through volunteering in various roles I have formed lifelong friendships. Now as "Madam" President, I hope to help the club grow in a positive direction.

Cross country skiing is a wonderful sport that our whole family loves. A great deal of that enthusiasm comes from skiing at Lappe. We are all very fortunate to have the trails and facilities.

Hope to see everyone at the Open House

Liz Inkila

News and Upcoming Events

Three of Lappe's home grown skiers are now members of the National Team Development Centre. Riku Metsaranta, Jill Maepea and Timo Puiras have been named to the NTDC. Congratulations! Lappe Nordic's tradition of developing and nurturing NTDC athletes, and welcoming NTDC retirees as members continues.

The Continental Cup is coming to Lappe trails in early December. This race series draws top cross country racers from both Canada and the United States. We are hoping the weather Gods smile upon us and provide early snow. This should prove to be an exciting event and an excellent opportunity for our local racers. Look for details in the race calendar. Volunteers are always needed and new ones welcome. There will be a sign up sheet at the Open House for volunteers.

The Open House is on Friday, September 14th, 6pm-9pm. Drive out to the Ski Centre and enjoy renewing winter friendships. Refreshments will be available. This is the time to sign up for Jackrabbits, Club memberships, and to purchase your Lappe Ski Centre trail passes. The Club is offering an incentive to all those purchasing a trail pass by 9pm that evening. We will be drawing for a Lappe single trail pass for the 2002-2003 ski season at 9pm. This is one more great reason to come to the Open House.

Lappe Lizards at the 2001 Thunder Bay Dragon Boat Festival

By Werner Schwar

This past July several members of the Lappe Nordic Ski Club and friends formed a team of 22 to participate in the Dragon Boat Festival for the second year.

After last year's surprise 3rd place finish, just behind the Nordic Dragons (Big Thunder Nordic Ski Club) the crew this year was eager to improve upon the result and slay the Nordic Dragons. In addition to the two practice sessions provided by the race organizers, the team opted to have an additional practice every week for a month before the competition. This proved to be challenging to say the least with 22 people's work and holiday schedules. None-the-less we felt better prepared than last year. Some teams take it even more seriously, starting practice in the winter paddling at the side of indoor pools.

The day of the competition came, and the Lappe Lizards were right in the hunt for a position in the final which was to be selected from the top four boats out of 98 over two heats. There was lots of nervous energy in our boat for the first heat. Paddling at such a ferocious pace that even I went into oxygen debt in what was only a bit over a 2 minute race. The end result however was that we finished 5th overall, only a second away from qualifying for the final. Our only consolation was that we finished a few seconds ahead of Big Thunder, and that we are probably better in the sport that really matters – skiing.

Lappe Masters Group 2001 –2002

After the success of last year's first attempt at providing Masters Skiers with the opportunity to get together and work on technique and conditioning, we are starting to plan for the upcoming ski season. We are considering offering a few dry-land pole-walking sessions in late October to get things going, and starting the ski sessions in December, if the snow conditions are good. Look for more information posted at the Ski Centre or talk to Jim Groulx or Werner Schwar.

Racing Rabbits

The Lappe Racing Rabbits program is intended for young cross country skiers who have mastered basic classical and free technique skiing skills, usually by progressing through the regular Jackrabbit Ski Program. Racing Rabbits are typically in the 11-14 age range, and most participants have a more competitive nature and interest in their skiing. However, some of the skiers are there just to ski in a group with similar abilities.

Last year Werner Schwar with assistance from Paul Inkila and Timo Tikka, led a group of 10 Racing Rabbits throughout the winter. Sessions were held on Saturday mornings, and progressed from reviewing fundamental skiing skills to more advanced techniques.

This year, the Racing Rabbits will begin in the fall with one session a week (Saturday or Sunday). The focus will be on activities to get into shape for the winter season, and introduce participants to training for cross country skiing. Activities will include mountain biking, running time trials, group orienteering, pole walking, roller blading or skiing, and possibly joint sessions with older Junior Development or National Training Centre athletes. Once Lappe gets snow cover, the group will continue to meet during the regular Jackrabbit time - Saturdays 11am-1pm.

Lappe's Racing Rabbits will be encouraged to participate in the many local cross country ski races in Thunder Bay, and especially the Bailey's Wednesday Night Series. Some of the group will likely travel to Marathon in February for the Ontario Championships.

If you are interested in joining the Racing Rabbits sign up at Lappe's Open House on Sept 14, or call Paul at 767-1860.

Athlete Rep. Report

Hi all. It is my pleasure to serve you as the athlete representative for Lappe Nordic racers on the board of directors. However, it would be fantastic if I would know who the athletes I am representing are. If you are a junior, senior, or masters athlete planning or interested in racing for the Lappe Nordic Ski Club next winter, please contact me in one of the ways illustrated below. I will keep you in touch with Club happenings and forward all your concerns, questions, or issues to the board.

Thank you,

Timo Puiras
RR#1 Kaministiquia
P0T 1X0

xctimo@hotmail.com
cell: 626-0343

Jackrabbits!

I know it is almost indecent to talk about snow and skiing when it's still August and the sun is shining, but this is the time of year to begin planning your children's winter activities. The Jackrabbit program is a wonderful place to start!

We would like to increase the number of Jackrabbits in our program this year, especially in the 12 to 14 age group. For kids this age, who have not done a lot of skiing, there is a specific group called the Challenge Level. The focus of this level is to increase the skiers ability in an atmosphere of friendship and recreational skiing. If you know of any young teens who would be interested in taking up cross country skiing. please let them know about our Challenge Group.

We will once again be hosting a Ski Swap, the date to be set soon at the Lappe Ski Centre. We would like to have a good variety of children's equipment for the sale this year. If you have any skis, boots, poles or ski clothes for children and you are finished using them, please consider bringing them to this year's Ski Swap.

I am looking for an Assistant Big Bunny to help out with the coordination of the Jackrabbit Program this season. There is the understanding that the Assistant Big Bunny will then take over the Big Bunny Ears for the following year. This volunteer position is not overwhelming in time commitment, and provides an opportunity to hone your organizational skills, work with great kids, learn more about the structure of skiing in NWOnt and the Lappe Nordic Ski Club, as well as make a difference to many families. If you think you might be interested in this volunteer position, please call Judi Vinni at 933-4147.

If you have any questions about Jackrabbits feel free to call me at the same number. I look forward to seeing you at the Open House.

Judi Vinni
Big Bunny

Growing to Love Lappe

I grew up cross country skiing at Strathcona Golf Course and along the railway tracks in Current River. I continued to ski as a young adult out at camp with a few treks to Centennial Park and Jarvis Bay. Groomed trails were not something I was very familiar with, but I loved to tromp through the snow and feel the thrill of skiing.

For the past 12 years, I have lived on 4th Concession, just a few short km from the Lappe Ski Centre. For the first five years, I drove past Lappe each day to and from work. In the winter I would slow down and look into the big parking lot and wonder what it must be like to ski there. I often spoke about wanting to go down to the ski centre and give it a try, but an assumed intimidation always kept me away.

What did I think Lappe Nordic was? Why was I afraid to stop in and begin to enjoy the best winter sport going?

First - I think I felt my ability was not at a level to be skiing at a "real" ski facility!

Second - My equipment was old, no high tech here!

Third - My ski apparel was definitely not a fashion statement.

Fourth - My body was not that trim, long legged, athlete type that could slip into those tight clothes anyway.

And finally - I was only 50% Finn, maybe that was not enough to fit in at Lappe.

Well, years glided by and I found myself part of a women's running group that shifted from running in the winter to skiing at Lappe. Now was my chance to get out there and give it a try. So my first two years skiing at Lappe was all done in the dark, I felt secure knowing it was dark and no one would notice me, plus I was surrounded by friends.

I never saw the trails in daylight until my son was almost 5 years old and I wanted him to be part of the Jackrabbit Program I heard other running group members talk about. Jackrabbits was my true introduction to the Ski Centre and the Lappe Nordic Ski Club.

Five years have past since I began going down the road to the ski centre and my involvement in and appreciation of the club and the facility continue to grow. My progression was very typical of other volunteers, from Parent Helper to Assistant Group Leader, to Bunny leader to green leader, and Assistant Big Bunny to presently Big Bunny and Ski Club board member.

At this point when the club is at a critical point in terms of members, competitive skiers, image and volunteers, I think to myself. Why have I been giving my time and energy to Lappe? What happened to all the reasons that kept me away for so long, those years ago?

Here's the answers:

1. My two children have enjoyed each season they have spent in the Jackrabbit program and are evolving into very competent skiers.
2. Lappe offers incredible trails, dynamic landscape, awesome pancakes, soothing saunas, and professionally run events.
3. The people, both young and old that my children and I have met there are wonderful.
4. My volunteering has allowed me to learn new skills, be involved in large events, hold the hands of brand new skiers and it gets me and my family out each Saturday for fresh air and fun.
5. Being a part of the Lappe Nordic Ski Club Board is an exciting opportunity to assist in promoting my community, while practicing the organizational and communication skills needed to work effectively as part of a team.

When I look back at my original barriers to skiing at Lappe, I can now state that my skiing has improved some, but better still is the improvement in my instructional skills since the club has offered certification to its volunteer leaders.

I'm still only 50% Finn, although I have 4 years of Finn school under my belt now, but once again I've learned that Lappe is for everyone, young and old, new to skiing or skiing at an international level, from far and wide, a neighbour or a tourist.

My experience at Lappe has been very rewarding so far. I invite you to join me and do the same.

Please watch for our upcoming survey of past and present members and volunteers. The board is concerned about our decreasing numbers and is eager to bring these numbers back up. We want to hear from you with your suggestions, comments and concerns to revitalize the Lappe Nordic Ski Club and increase the usage at the Ski Centre. Please fill out a survey response at the Open House or phone Judi at 933-4147 to request one.

Judi Vinni

Upcoming Events

Sept 10 @ 7:00pm - Lappe Nordic Ski Club Meeting

Sept 14 @ 6:00pm - Open House

Sept 20 @ 5:45pm - Bingo @ Red River Rd

Sept 29 @ TBA - Sawdust Run

For Club and Ski Centre information call the **Snow Phone at 623-3735** or check out our website at **flash.lakeheadu.ca/~lnordic**

BINGO\$\$\$\$\$BINGO\$\$\$\$\$BINGO\$\$\$\$\$BINGO

BINGO\$\$\$\$\$BINGO\$\$\$\$\$BINGO\$\$\$\$\$BINGO

Club Rental of the Ski Centre

Trips for Racers & Club members

Equipment Storage Lockers

Training for Coaches & Jackrabbit leaders

Timing Equipment & Wax

Junior National Championships

COME OUT

AND VOLUNTEER